

Director's report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
presented by Jeffrey Koenings, Ph.D., WDFW Director
February 4, 2005

A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

Fish Passage In Steep, Headwater Streams: Staff participated in a WDFW meeting to brainstorm on how to determine when culvert upgrades are needed because of good spawning and/or rearing habitat being upstream. Staff recommended a simplified HSI/WUA approach that can be completed in the field to assess habitat quality/quantity upstream for salmonid life stages. This should allow biologists to prioritize stream reaches into risk categories with additional consideration of habitat isolation that can increase risk via limited fish-recovery potential if a disaster happens. Staff will write a short methodology for this approach. We have been invited to the bigger meeting planned for mid-February.

Lake Washington Sockeye Sport Harvest 2004: Through efforts by volunteer fishers and agency staff over 300 sport caught heads were collected during the '04 sport fishery on Lake Washington. The otoliths were extracted and decoded by the NRB otolith lab staff, to determine whether they were released from the Sockeye Hatchery or from the wild spawners in the Cedar R. A preliminary analysis of this data shows approximately 21% of the adults caught in the sports fishery came from the hatchery. This compares to 25% hatchery fish caught in the 2001 fishery. Also note worthy, there was no significant size difference between hatchery and wild origin adults. This has been a key concern identified in the Adaptive Management Plan for this integrated population.

An additional 2,000 Sockeye heads were collected by agency Science Division staff from the commercial Tribal fisheries in Lake Union and Shilshole. These samples are in the process of being decoded and will be included in the final analysis.

The Role of Predator and Prey Size in Evaluating Predation Risk by Smallmouth Bass in the Yakima River, Washington: We have recently submitted a manuscript to Transactions of the American Fisheries Society titled: "The Role of Predator and Prey Size in Evaluating Predation Risk by Smallmouth Bass in the Yakima River, Washington" by Anthony L. Fritts and Todd N. Pearsons. This paper highlights the role of smaller bass as the main predator of fall chinook salmon in the lower Yakima River and lends support for the statewide slot limit and no limit for bass less than 12 inches in the Yakima River as a management tool to alter the size structure of the smallmouth bass population and reduce the negative impacts of this non-native piscivore.

Risk Assessment Modeling Project (RAMP): Staff are in the final stages of development of an ecological risk product from the Risk Assessment Modeling Project (RAMP), a BPA funded effort. The ecological risk model, PCDRISK, is a windows compatible product that assesses risks to natural fish due to predation, competition, and disease from released hatchery fish. It has already been tested/demonstrated to favorable reviews at an ecological risk workshop held by Todd in cooperation with Peninsula College. Final modifications are now being made to it to allow truly probabilistic risk output, where instead of using single values for input, ranges of values can be used. This will allow the user to vary nearly all parameters at once and see graphical output of expected mortality levels.

Wildlife Area Planning: The Lands Division has kicked off it's 2005, Wildlife Area Planning Process with the intent of having plans ready for SEPA review by December. The new plans are designed to reflect the Lands Vision Framework (now on the Web at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lands2020/index.htm>); WDFW's Strategic Plan; and goals, objectives, and strategies based on the specific wildlife area. These are agency and public plans, and the process is one of inclusion. If you have an interest in or issue with how WDFW lands are managed, please get involved. The best window for input and influence is now until the end of June. Contact the Wildlife Area Manager or Mark Quinn to provide input on the new plans. The managers will also be working with local citizen advisory groups and the statewide Lands Advisory Council.

Pacific Education Institute (PEI): WDFW's Director and DNR's Commissioner met with the PEI Board of Directors on January 31, 2005. The next step for Project Black Bear in Tumwater School District and how it will be modeled after Project CAT was discussed.

WDFW's staff testified as the Co-Executive Director of the Pacific Education Institute on behalf of the Director before the House Education Committee describing PEI research that demonstrates the value of rigorous environmental education to student achievement.

Staff also met with ten Superintendents of school districts served by the New Market Vocational Skills Center to describe PEI's plan to develop an environmental science course with internships for high school students to begin in 2006.

The staff will be presenting the changing face of environmental education at the Puget Sound Action Team's conference in Seattle on behalf of WDFW and the Wildlife Program.

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

WDFW Spearheads US Coast Guard Regional Response Team Wildlife Work Group: The US Coast Guard-sponsored Northwest Area Committee has chartered a wildlife work group to develop a wildlife response plan for inclusion in the Northwest Area Contingency Plan for oil spills. The Northwest Area consists of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Oil Spill Team member Chris Lane, co-chairs the work group. The group will also develop a plan to coordinate resource damage assessment evidentiary requirements for wildlife with oiled wildlife response activities. The Oil Spill Team's Brian McDonald, will assist on this

important feature of the plan. The work group includes representatives from private sector oil spill responders, the petroleum industry, wildlife rehabilitators, Ecology, NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others.

Oil Spill Team Facilitates Volunteer Wildlife Rescue Training: The Oil Spill Team will distribute a "Request for Qualifications/Quote" (RFQQ) to interested parties to provide "Oiled Wildlife Rescue/Response Training" for volunteers throughout the state. Following the recent Dalco Pass Oil Spill, the Governor and US Coast Guard chartered a task force to review oil spill response procedures presently in-place, and to make recommendations for improving the state's capability to provide timely and effective responses to oil spills. The task force's report recommendations included the use of trained volunteers during spills.

This RFQQ will be used to contract with qualified professionals who will provide training for individuals and groups that serve as "first responders" for wildlife rescue/rehabilitation. Training also will be provided for those who, in turn, provide training to volunteers during oil spills when additional volunteers are required. This continues a decade-long WDFW tradition of facilitating training and using volunteers for oiled wildlife rescue and response.

Lower Dosewallips Reach Analysis: Bob Barnard (Habitat Engineering Technical Assistance section) has recently completed the Lower Dosewallips reach analysis, fulfilling the obligation of an agreement with the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Skokomish tribes and in cooperation with Washington Trout and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. This study looks at the physical and biological conditions in the lower river (downstream of US 101) and proposes estuarine/ channel restoration activities that will enhance habitat for fish and wildlife. The report identifies channel aggradations and a prograding bay front as potentially destabilizing influences, the progression of distributaries to blind tidal channels, and the effects of historic channelization in simplifying habitat.

Entiat River Off-Channel Habitat Restoration: The completion of the two SFRB projects on the Entiat River marks the first off-channel restoration projects in that drainage. The projects were the result of several years of collaboration between WDFW, Icicle chapter of Trout Unlimited, orchardist/landowner John Small, and Rayfield Brothers Construction. The John Small project is a new spring-fed pond connected to the river, along with appropriate bank protection and habitat structures in the Entiat River at the pond outlet. The Wilson side-channel project will provide year-round water into an existing side channel that previously went dry seasonally, stranding and killing salmonids. Both projects included addition of a significant amount of large wood (conifers and cherry trees) to the channel for fish habitat. The projects will benefit listed steelhead as well as Chinook and other fish and wildlife species.

Legislation Review: Staff reviewed legislation proposed for submission by the WEC to facilitate point of diversion changes that have permanent environmental benefits. The concept emerged out of the Manastash project where concerns about relinquishment prevent the consolidation of several irrigation diversions into one. This water conservation approach is clearly environmentally superior by creating better passage and instream flow benefits. Although all of the rights have been recently adjudicated,

Ecology is required to determine whether relinquishment has occurred (RCW 90.03.380). Thus, farmers were unwilling to voluntarily go through the change process (i.e., WEC's threat of Endangered Species Act; litigation requires them to solve the problem, but not necessarily in an environmentally superior way) because of risks to their water rights. WEC is trying to formulate an approach that doesn't provide amnesty from relinquishment, but does dispel the fear of it in situations where environmental benefits could be achieved. Staff reviewed several bills, including the Columbia River Initiative implementation bill (SB 5120, HB 1099) and a water court bill. WDFW staff are keeping a careful eye on the bills.

Washington State Department of Transportation Appeals: WDFW staff are working cooperatively with WSDOT to review and evaluate hydraulic project provisions to assure appropriate protection of fish life while enabling essential projects to move forward expeditiously. This coordination is being conducted under the procedure set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement between the two agencies.

Puget Island Erosion: Habitat staff continues to work with Wahkiakum County and property owners on Puget Island to address shipwake erosion concerns. The most serious situation involves residences at the downstream tip of the island that were historically protected by beach nourishment activities. COE has ceased nourishment activities in recent years, and erosion is now threatening several residences.

Through coordination with project consultants and COE/NOAA staff, we have agreed to a preliminary project design for addressing two of the most serious situations in the immediate future. Regional staffs are also participating on a "Puget Island Executive Erosion Control Committee" that consists of representatives from local government, state government, and staff from the offices of Senator Cantwell, Congressman Baird, and Senator Murray.

Columbia River Coho: Lower Columbia River coho have been proposed for listing under the federal ESA by NOAA Fisheries. In response to this listing, WDFW is engaging the Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE) process in pursuit of an alternative to a federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Establishing a monitoring and evaluation plan for coho is a key component to a conservation plan that will meet federal criteria under the PECE. The coho conservation plan will build on the Lower Columbia River Salmon Recovery Plan, which calls for increased monitoring of coho populations.

WDFW has proposed a scientifically credible plan to monitor lower Columbia River coho salmon to determine population status and trends and has requested funding from the state to implement this plan. The primary objective of the plan is to measure the abundance and distribution of 16 populations based on results from spatially balanced random spawning ground surveys. Additionally, biological sampling of coho carcasses will be conducted for the purpose of estimating genetic and life history diversity. In addition to monitoring adults returns, smolt monitoring efforts will need to be expanded to validate assumptions used to estimate adult abundance and to provide juvenile production estimates necessary for completing accurate recruit per spawner analyses. Again, the plan builds on the existing coho smolt monitoring at Cedar Creek in the NF Lewis and the IMW (Abernathy and adjacent creeks) by

adding smolt monitoring at two other sites per year. The funding request included upgrades for existing trap sites and development of additional trap sites.

Juvenile White Sturgeon Marking: Fish Program staff from Regions 1 and 2 assisted with marking and PIT tagging juvenile sturgeon being held at the Columbia Basin Hatchery. This effort is part of the larger Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Project. These juvenile fish are scheduled to be released into Lake Roosevelt at locations from Kettle Falls north to the Canadian border, in February. This supplementation effort is part of a larger combined supplementation effort being coordinated between U.S. and Canadian partners.

Sanitary Shellfish Patrol: (1) Officers worked sanitary shellfish during the night tides during the week of January 10th, resulting in an array of criminal activity, including the apprehension of a suspect in a stolen vehicle, the recovery of over \$1,000 of stolen property in a separate case that involved a foot pursuit to apprehend the suspects, minors in possession of alcohol, narcotics violations, trespass, etc. Of course, mixed in with these contacts, were numerous commercial shellfish harvest contacts and recreational shellfish violations. (2) Officers coordinated an emphasis patrol over the weekend of January 22nd concentrating on sanitary shellfish enforcement during the nighttime low tide series. The emphasis involved over 30 officers from across the state. The Marine Division deployed vessels on Hood Canal and Dyes Inlet to provide surveillance from the water while officers patrolled prohibited beaches in Thurston, Mason, Kitsap, Pierce, and Jefferson counties. Skokomish Tribal Police participated as well, as did DOH Health Inspector Frank Cox. Several arrests were made through the three night patrol including two for possessing commercial quantities of hardshell clams without a valid DOH Certification, failure to tag commercial oysters, operating without Health Certificate on site, one arrest for DUI, four warrant arrests, Driving Without Valid License, open containers, possession of marijuana, and approximately 15 recreational shellfish violations, mostly over-limit and licenses.

Razor Clam Patrol: All Coastal Marine Officers, and the Sergeant and Captain worked the razor clam season. Sergeant Rhoden won the toaster award for catching the greediest digger - he arrested one subject for possessing five limits of razor clams, obstructing a police officer, and digging without a license.

Market & Restaurant Emphasis Patrols: Officers conducted a market and restaurant emphasis in Pierce and King Counties. Pierce County Department of Health was notified of a restaurant that was very unsanitary, the freezer was not working, and all the precooked food was melted, the food items on the top shelves were dripping onto the food on lower shelves. Another Officer performed four Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) market check patrols in Pierce County. Several violations were detected, including unlicensed wholesale dealers and an investigation on live sturgeon sales.

Undersize Crab: Coastal crab fishers are encountering lots of undersized crab already this year. Problems are developing earlier than usual. Officers sorted through over 7,000 lbs of crabs in Chinook. They found 240 lbs of shorts and females. The vessel had 3% by weight of undersized crab and three female crabs on board. An Officer inspected several crab offloads in Westport, 4.8% of the crabs were undersized by

weight and three female crabs were also discovered. The skipper and crew were contacted, interviewed, and citations will be following.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS): The statewide Species of Greatest Conservation Need list is essentially complete and awaiting review by the Director. Chris Sato and Joe La Tourrette are drafting nine ecoregional chapters for the CWCS, each with its own list of ecoregional species and habitat priorities, and a summary by major habitat of conservation threats, problems, and recommended actions. This information is being synthesized from ecoregional assessments, sub-basin plans, and other sources. WDFW staff in Olympia met with Region 2 staff in Ephrata on January 28th, to review rough draft chapters for the Columbia Plateau and Okanogan ecoregions; a similar planning workshop will be held with Region 3 staff on February 8th, in Ellensburg. He also met with the Yakama Indian Nation wildlife staff on January 27th, to discuss the CWCS, as well as Intermountain West Joint Venture issues.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Lake Washington Hydraulic Project Permitting Coordination: In response to the business community, WDFW Habitat staff will be facilitating a meeting with concerned businesses and several federal, state, and local agencies to answer questions, clarify permitting procedures, and better coordinate regulation requirements between agencies. It is intended to make this an on-going group, meeting regularly to discuss concerns and acquire pertinent scientific information

Cedar River Broodsock Weir Status: Key City of Renton staff recently provided positive feed back on a revised HPA draft letter from WDFW, concerning future Cedar River dredging activity. Agency staff from Region 4 and Headquarters has been working closely with the Mayor, key City staff, and the City Council; in an effort to reach agreement on siting a new broodstock collection weir on City property adjacent to the I-405 bridge over the Cedar River. The agency has agreed to certain modifications to the current HPA language that include future biological monitoring and mitigation requirements. This is a major milestone in the process of moving forward with constructing a new Cedar River Sockeye facility at Landsberg Dam.

Waterfowl Emphasis Patrol: Detachment 16 (Grant County) implemented a joint waterfowl emphasis patrol in conjunction with Detachment 19 (Franklin County) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to cover North Franklin, West Adams, and South Grant counties. The 3-day emphasis patrol resulted in 15 arrests and numerous warnings. The majority of clubs contacted received literature and other information on regulations pertaining to baiting, possession, and tagging requirements

INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

Commencement Bay Natural Resource Damage Assessment: The Shared Strategy is honoring John Carleton and other members of the Commencement Bay Trustee Council for their efforts in salmon

recovery. The Trustee Council is responsible for recovering damages from polluters at the Commencement Bay Superfund Site, and for developing restoration sites to compensate for resource losses. To date, tens of millions of dollars have been invested in habitat restoration as a result of this process, with many further settlements and projects expected.

Oil Spill Damage Assessment and Penalty Funds to be Used for Fish and Wildlife Restoration Projects: Dan Doty with the Oil Spill Team recently participated in the final review and selection of restoration projects to benefit fish and wildlife affected by oil spills in Puget Sound and the lower Columbia River. Dan represented the agency on the advisory committee for the Columbia River Estuarine Coastal Fund (through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) and on the Washington State Coastal Protection Fund Steering committee. Several excellent fish and wildlife restoration projects will be funded in regions 4, 5, and 6 over the next few years from these two sources. For further information, call Dan Doty, Major Projects Division at 360-902-8120.

Cowlitz County Public Works Department Coordination: Habitat staff held a coordination meeting with Cowlitz County Public Works staff, COE, and NOAA Fisheries staff to discuss how our various agencies can coordinate better on permitting issues. Topics of discussion included communications, project design requirements (e.g., bridges, culverts, etc.), mitigation requirements/expectations, and permit procedures and streamlining opportunities. The meeting was well attended, productive, and has already lead to improved coordination on regulatory issues.

LeClerc Creek Antimycin Project - Postponement: The Regional Fish Program has postponed removal of Eastern brook trout with antimycin from Middle Branch LeClerc Creek in Pend Oreille County. Although the fish removal project was approved by a Citizen Advisory Group working with the Pend Oreille County Lead Entity for salmonid recovery and funded by the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), public meetings held last summer revealed lingering concerns from the public about this project. The Department will join with the Pend Oreille County Lead Entity to spend more time addressing concerns, and generally explaining how this project, along with other efforts, can help restore native salmonid populations in northeast Washington. An agency news release informing the public of this action was released Friday January 14th.

MINIMIZE ADVERSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND WILDLIFE.

Public Safety Cougar Removals (PSCR): GMUs 407 and 454 are now closed in the PSCR process. A total of 5 cats were taken in these two GMUs.

GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES
PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL
OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND
HABITATS.

WildWatch Cam: The WildWatchCam project is working to bring two new wildlife cams complete with images and information into the hearts and homes of the viewing public. From the very visible, audible great blue heron to the very small and not so visible burrowing owl of central Washington, the new cams also feature a new community collaborative approach for funding and community education and outreach.

The HeronCam and website <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/heroncam/index.html> brings together such unlikely partners as the King County Sheriff's Office, Kenmore Library, King County Metro Transit Authority, Seattle Audubon Society, and a local citizen's wetlands group to bring multiple live cameras peeking into the tree-top lives of the great blue heron. WDFW Biologist with assistance from the Watchable Wildlife and WildWatchCam staff coordinated the project. The streaming video and other updated-images serve as the bait "luring" viewers to the larger conservation and management highlighted on the website. The Kenmore Library and WDFW staff and community partners are developing a wetlands/great blue heron resource center. Videos, books for children and adults, posters, and great blue heron teacher kits will be available at the library. Large flat screen monitors located at the public reception areas of Sheriff's Office and Library will be showing images of the heron nesting and interactions. Interpretive signs located at the adjacent Park and Ride will highlight great blue heron and wetlands ecology and lead people to the WDFW WildWatchCam website for more information.

Several hundred miles away in Pasco/Tri cities area a much smaller, less visible bird, the burrowing owl, is also receiving a close-up look from the WildWatchCams. These small diurnal owls spend most of the nesting season on or under the ground in burrows and are a natural subject for the small cameras and supporting website. The community collaborative effort to create this website is also diverse, involving owl researchers, an area library, local Audubon chapter and other partners. The effort is lead by WDFW Biologist and assisted by the WildWatchCam staff. Both cams also share community goals of influencing public attitudes about native wildlife species and their associated habitats and co-inhabitants. Websites should be available to the public by early February with live cameras later this spring.

WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED.

Cowlitz River Basin (WRIA 26): Science Division staff and Ecology developed an approach to instream flow suitability criteria for amphibians for the instream flow study for Packwood Lake hydroelectric project (FERC 2244) relicensing.

First Draft 2005 Future Brood Document: The First Draft 2005 Future Brood Document, for the upcoming brood year, was posted on the Internet for review on January 14, 2005, and is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hat/reports/future_brood.htm. The Future Brood Document (FBD) is a pre-season planning document for fish hatchery production in Washington State for the upcoming brood stock collection and fish rearing season (July 1st - June 30th).

The FBD is coordinated between WDFW, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) representing Puget Sound and coastal treaty tribes, eastern Washington treaty tribes, and Federal fish hatcheries. Hatchery production by volunteers, schools, and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups are represented by WDFW. The purpose of the document is to detail agreed to production goals and plans for hatcheries. The document represents goals for egg-takes, transfers, and releases. The First Draft of the FBD is used for review purposes only. Regional meeting will be held for corrections and changes to the document. The Second Draft will contain these changes and will be posted for final review May 16, 2005. The FBD was developed to meet several requirements, not limited to:

Legal Constraints

Mitigative Obligations

WDFW Goals and Objectives

Hatchery Scientific Review Group Recommendations

Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMP)

Benefit Risk Assessment Process (BRAP)

Salmonid Disease Control Policy of the Fisheries Co-managers of Washington State

Final Joint WDFW/Tribal Wild Salmonid Policy

Nooksack Elk: Headquarters and Region 4 staff met with several tribes to discuss issues with the Nooksack elk herd. It was a good opportunity to exchange ideas. Topics covered included: the potential for using the passive capture technique this spring, the status of this fall's capture, the project to improve the Nooksack population estimate, and future hunting opportunities. Staff needs to contact the new land owners in the release area to get permission to release in the spring and check with Region 5 on whether a spring capture will target the appropriate animals. The fall capture project is still a go, provided the mountain cooperates. Tribal and agency staff will continue their work on the population estimate. Some of the animals may need to be re-collared since some of the collars are about to go off the air. It was agreed that any hunting would follow the herd plan, which sets population targets and requires us to wait one year after the last transfer.

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Columbia River Commercial Fishery Gear Study: Region 5 has received funding to test the effectiveness of excluder panels in reducing the handle of steelhead in the live capture commercial fishery that occurs in the lower Columbia during late February through March. In response to NOAA Fisheries requiring the release of all wild Willamette spring chinook handled in freshwater fisheries, the spring chinook commercial fishery switched gear for large mesh gill nets (> 8") to small mesh tangle nets (< 4¼") for the purpose of maximizing survival rates of non-target salmonids handled in this fishery. The change in gears resulted in a significant increase in the number steelhead handled in this fishery.

Past commercial fisheries harvesting spring chinook depended on large mesh gear to focus the fishery on spring chinook and minimize the handle of steelhead; however, under these new fishing

requirements that strategy is no longer effective due to high post release mortality rates on listed spring chinook. The commercial fishery is currently investigating methods for reducing steelhead handle in this fishery, and one promising strategy is installing excluder panels on tangle nets. Excluder panels consist of 5'-10' deep panels of extra large mesh (> 12") that are attached to top portion of the net between the cork line and the small mesh tangle net.

The excluder was initiated based on the theory that steelhead move higher in the water column and the use of an excluder will reduce steelhead catch to a greater extent than chinook catch; however, this assumption has not been fully tested. If this assumption were true then implementation of the use of excluders in this fishery would result in increasing the hatchery chinook to wild steelhead ratio by increasing chinook catches with similar or decreased steelhead handle.

Data concerning catch rates of chinook and steelhead has been collected in conjunction with fishery monitoring and test fishing activities, but this data is not adequate to determine how excluders affect the spring chinook and steelhead catch rates. WDFW and ODFW are considering requiring the use of excluders during the live capture commercial spring chinook fishery but do not have the data to support this regulation. The purpose of this study will be to collect the data necessary to determine if excluders are effective at increasing the hatchery chinook to wild steelhead ratio in this fishery, which ultimately better achieves the objective of this fishery to harvest surplus hatchery spring chinook while limiting impacts to listed non-target species.

GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Agency Web Site: Recent new items on the agency web site include a set of Warmwater Fish Science and Survey reports, updated Columbia River Compact steelhead assessments and fact sheets, the new Lands document "Lands 20/20, a Clear Vision for the Future", and the North of Falcon web pages for 2005.

PROVIDE SOUND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF WDFW LANDS, FACILITIES AND ACCESS SITES.

Samish Hatchery Pond Renovation: The Capital Programs and Engineering Division have nearly completed a renovation of the ponds at Samish Hatchery. Samish Hatchery had 12 concrete ponds, eight of which were in poor condition and not configured for modern fish production practices. This construction project required the demolition of the eight ponds, construction of eight new ponds, and a pollution abatement system. The abatement system will allow cleaning of the ponds and settling of the effluent to reduce suspended solids discharges into the environment in order to comply with Department of Ecology standards. This project should be complete at the end of April.

New Region 1 Office (Spokane): Facilities and regional office staffs have completed working on the final layout of furniture for the new Region 1 Office. The furniture order has been placed and should arrive sometime in May.

PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

Fatal Hunting Accident: A fatal hunting accident occurred near Moses Lake at approximately 1:30 p.m. Wednesday. Both subjects were walking out of the field with their gear when the shooter noticed that the safety of his shotgun was not engaged. While attempting to engage the safety, his shotgun discharged striking the victim in the upper thigh with #2 BBs. The femoral artery was perforated.

Upon arrival, Officers Jewell and Erhardt immediately started first aid, trying to keep the victim talking and stable. The local medical evacuation helicopter was summoned and transported the victim to Samaritan Hospital in Moses Lake.

Kerry Taylor Receives Award: Access Manager Kerry Taylor received the Ann Faast Award for Outstanding Service from the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council. Kerry's years of dedication to the job and the agency, long recognized by those of us associated with the access program, have now been made known to a broad spectrum of agency supporters. Congratulations Kerry!

DEVELOP INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COORDINATE DATA SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION.

WILD, Next Generation System: The WILD project continues through the Request For Proposal (RFP) development phase. The Project Steering Committee is working to resolve the remaining questions about the design of the new system. The license-buying public will see a system that looks very much like the current one. The license dealers are likely to experience more change, so attention on dealer review of issues like the design of the dealer equipment, and the method of communication with the database servers will be taking place before the RFP is issued. In mid-February, Department staff will be showing a group of dealers some credit card-type equipment that can be used to issue licenses. The intent is to get feedback on different types of equipment before writing the RFP.

Hood Canal Beach Website Updates: Intertidal management staff completed "customizing" 19 of the agency web pages containing information on public clam and oyster beaches in northern Hood Canal. This is an on-going effort to provide sport harvesters with detailed beach-specific information on how to access the beaches, what types of shellfish are found there, what facilities are available, and tips on where to harvest. Staff also placed the proposed rule changes for sport clam and oyster harvest on both the agency web page and the shellfish hotline, giving harvesters advance notice of recommended season changes on Region 6 beaches.

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF WDFW'S OPERATIONAL AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES.

Sale of Spokane Office: Lands staff completed closing of the sale of the old Spokane Regional Office for \$658,000. Terms of the sale allow WDFW to retain possession of the property through June 30, 2005, at

no cost and the right to lease the site through December 31, 2005, if necessary. Proceeds from the sale are intended to offset some of the costs of constructing the new facility.